

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for managing ads, the method implemented on a computerized self-service platform and comprising:

assisting an advertiser to create orders for ads to be placed on web pages, the orders defining:

the ads,

a placement of the ads on the web pages, and

a time period for the placement of the ads; and

submitting the created orders.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the self-service platform is accessible through a web site.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the self-service platform is accessible by the advertiser via a web browser.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting the advertiser to create the orders comprises:

assisting the advertiser to create ads.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of assisting the advertiser to create ads comprises:

providing a template for ads;

receiving information to be inserted into the template; and

creating the ad based on inserting the received information into the template.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of assisting the advertiser to create ads further comprises:

displaying a preview of the ad.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create the orders further comprises:

submitting the created ad for review for placement on the web page.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create the orders further comprises:

assisting an advertiser to create campaigns, each campaign defining:

- the ads to be used in the campaign,
- a placement of the ads for the campaign, and
- a time period for the campaign.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein each campaign further defines:

a campaign budget for the campaign.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create campaigns comprises:

- displaying ads available for use in the campaign; and
- receiving a selection of which ads the advertiser desires to use in the campaign.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create campaigns comprises:

- displaying time periods available for the campaign; and
- receiving a selection of which time periods the advertiser desires for the campaign.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create campaigns comprises:

generating an alert for a campaign if the campaign is submitted to run but the campaign is not yet ready to run.

13. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
assisting an advertiser to manage the orders.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to manage the orders comprises:  
displaying a summary of ads; and  
assisting the advertiser to edit the ads.
15. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to manage the orders comprises:  
assisting the advertiser to edit any of:  
which ads are part of an order,  
the placement of the ads on the web pages; and  
the time period for the placement of the ads.
16. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to manage the orders comprises:  
displaying a summary of campaigns, each campaign defining:  
the ads to be used in the campaign,  
a placement of the ads for the campaign, and  
a time period for the campaign; and  
assisting the advertiser to edit the campaigns.
17. The method of claim 13 wherein:  
each campaign has a status;  
the step of displaying a summary of campaigns comprises displaying a status of the campaign; and  
the step of assisting the advertiser to edit the campaigns comprises assisting the advertiser to make changes to the status of the campaign.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the status of the campaign is selected from a group consisting of Active, Suspended and Cancelled.
19. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to manage the orders comprises:
  - receiving edits to the orders; and
  - updating the orders in real-time.
20. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to manage the orders comprises:
  - assisting the advertiser to set alerts for the orders.
21. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
  - receiving prepayment for the orders, wherein as the ads run, debits are generated against the prepayment.
22. The method of claim 21 wherein, when the prepayment falls below a threshold level, the prepayment is automatically refilled.
23. The method of claim 21 wherein, when the prepayment falls below a threshold level, an alert is generated.
24. The method of claim 1 wherein pricing for the ads is set by a time that the order is created.
25. The method of claim 24 wherein the ads are priced on a CPC basis.
26. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
  - displaying reports concerning the orders.
27. A computer-implemented method for serving ads on web pages, the method comprising:
  - at a self-service platform, receiving orders for ads to be placed on web pages;

storing information about the received orders; and  
serving ads based on the stored information.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising:  
at the self-service platform, receiving edits to the orders;  
in real-time, updating the stored information about the orders in response to the edits; and  
serving ads based on the updated, stored information.
29. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of serving ads depends on a relevancy of the ads.
30. The method of claim 29 wherein the relevancy of an ad is measured at least in part by a financial measure.
31. The method of claim 29 wherein the relevancy of an ad is measured at least in part by contextual relevancy.
32. The method of claim 27 further comprising:  
at the self-service platform, receiving prepayment for the orders;  
upon serving of an ad, generating a debit against the prepayment.
33. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of receiving orders comprises:  
setting a price for an ad by a time that the order is created; and  
receiving the created order.
34. The method of claim 33 wherein the step of serving ads comprises:  
among orders for ads with a same price and a same desired placement, placing the ads  
depending upon a relevancy of the ads.

35. A system for self-service advertising comprising:
  - a self-serve user interface for assisting an advertiser to create orders for ads to be placed on web pages;
  - a self-serve billing module coupled to the self-serve user interface for billing the orders; and
  - a back-end system coupled to the self-serve billing module for servicing the orders.
36. The system of claim 35 wherein the back-end system comprises:
  - a contract management system for managing information about the orders; and
  - an ad server coupled to the contract management system for serving ads based on the orders.
37. The system of claim 36 wherein the back-end system further comprises:
  - a log aggregation module coupled to the contract management system for aggregating data about ad serves and providing updates of such data to the contract management system.
38. The system of claim 37 wherein the log aggregation module provides near real-time updates of such data to the contract management system.
39. The system of claim 37 wherein the self-serve billing module comprises:
  - a debit daemon for periodically processing debit information contained in such updates of data.
40. The system of claim 36 wherein:
  - the self-serve user interface is further for assisting the advertiser to edit the orders;
  - the contract management system is further for updating the information about the orders in real-time in response to the edits; and
  - the ad server is further for serving ads based on the updated, stored information.

41. The system of claim 36 further comprising:
  - an update server coupled between the contract management system and the ad server, for providing transactional updates to the ad server resulting from updates to the contract management system.
42. The system of claim 35 wherein the back-end system comprises:
  - a reports database storing data concerning the ads; and
  - a query server coupled between the self-serve user interface and the reports database for querying the reports database to generate reports and for caching query results.
43. The system of claim 35 wherein the back-end system comprises:
  - a query server coupled between the self-serve user interface and the reports database for querying the reports database to generate reports; and
  - a query cache located at a client for caching query results.
44. A method for managing ads, the method implemented on a self-service platform and comprising:
  - assisting an advertiser to create orders for ads to be placed on pages displayed over a communications network, the orders defining:
    - the ads,
    - a placement of the ads on the pages, and
    - a time period for the placement of the ads; and
  - submitting the created orders.
45. The method of claim 44 wherein the step of assisting an advertiser to create the orders further comprises:
  - assisting an advertiser to create campaigns, each campaign defining:
    - the ads to be used in the campaign,
    - a placement of the ads for the campaign, and

a time period for the campaign.

46. The method of claim 44 further comprising:  
receiving edits to the orders; and  
updating the orders in real-time.
47. The method of claim 44 further comprising:  
receiving prepayment for the orders, wherein as the ads run, debits are generated against  
the prepayment.
48. The method of claim 44 wherein pricing for the ads is set by a time that the order is  
created.